

Alice M. Monk

A BRAND FROM THE BURNING.

FORMATIVE ELEMENTS OF JAPANESE BUDDHISM.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

It is my object in this essay to give my readers a general description of Buddhism as it is in Japan. I do not intend to give them a learned description, full of antiquarian and linguistic researches. I want to try and show, in as plain and simple a manner as possible, what it is that an ordinary Japanese Buddhist believes, and what are the principles underlying his religious life.

In order to make this the plainer and the more easily comprehensible, I shall contrast Buddhism, the most popularly prevalent faith, with Christianity, taking the first part of the Catechism of the English Church, and putting side by side with its questions and answers, the corresponding doctrines and practices of Buddhism, so that it may easily and readily be seen where, and in what respects, a Buddhist differs from a Christian.

I premise that Buddhism in Japan is very different from the same religion in Ceylon or Burmah. Indeed so much do the two great forms of Buddhism differ from one another that I think it would really be better to give them separate names, and to describe the Buddhism of Japan as being not Buddhism so much as what is sometimes called Mahâyânism, the ex-

panded Buddhism of the later stages of Buddhist or Gnostic thought.*

(1). It is not generally known that there was, and still is, in Buddhism a Baptism (*Abhis'ekha* Jap. *kwanjo*), which was administered to the novice when he first joined the community of monks. This baptism is no longer administered, except in the Shingon sect,† but I have heard Buddhist priests of other sects regret its discontinuance. There is, I believe, no ceremony of initiation for a Buddhist layman, but if I, who am now a Christian, should by any inconceivable chance turn Buddhist, and wish to enter the company of the Buddhist priesthood, I should have to make a declaration somewhat to this effect. “*Namu Kie Hō*. I take refuge in the Law. *Namu Kie Sō*. I take refuge in the Priesthood. *Namu Kie Butsu*. I take refuge in Buddha.” Here we have something very much akin to the Baptismal Vow. “I take refuge. It is an evil world in which I live,” says the Buddhist. “It is full of misery, pain, sickness, disease and death. It is a transitory, evanescent world whose joys pass away. I must free myself from it, and in order to escape from the ‘miseries of this sinful world’ I take refuge,—in the Law, which is eternal, unchangeable, and true—in Buddha, who, incarnate in Sakyamuni and other great and godlike sages, has taught me what that Law is,

* Mahāyāna Buddhism arose about the first century of the Christian era. It is therefore chronologically contemporary with Gnosticism, the earliest heresy which Christianity had to combat. Mahāyānism and Gnosticism are very similar in their doctrines and philosophical ideas. Pilgrims to Jerusalem from the countries of the East, and merchants from India and China taking their wares to the sea-ports of the Mediterranean, to say nothing of the mysterious sages, the Magi,—all these must have brought back with them fragments of the Great Life that was being lived in Palestine, which fragments were woven into the books of the *Mahāyāna*, and especially into those which deal with the life Sakyamuni.

† On Dec. 31, 1907, I bought at the Daishi Temple at Kawasaki a tract, entitled *Yakuyoke Daishi*, in which there was a chapter entirely devoted to this Buddhist rite of Baptism, and urging Shingon believers to be baptized and even to have their Baptism repeated.

and who will bring me to that Enlightenment (*butsu*) to which he has himself attained,—and finally in the Community of the Monks who are striving to attain to the perfect Enlightenment in which alone salvation is to be found."

"I take refuge." It is a wider term than "I renounce." The pessimism of Buddhism is greater than the pessimism of Christianity. Christianity looks upon the world as "very evil," but it is the *world of men,—society*. Buddhism involves the whole of the Universe in its condemnation. Happiness cannot be attained so long as matter is there to hamper and hinder. And therefore the Buddhist "takes refuge" in the Law, Buddha, and the Community, and becomes a recluse.

The Christian, too, "takes refuge"—in God, His Law and his Church—but his refuge is no retreat or flight. He "renounces" (which implies a strong determination of will) "the world, the flesh and the devil." He "believes," (which is an act of Faith, something more than mere assent to) "the articles of the Christian Faith." He "promises" (again an act of the will) to keep God's will and commandments, and he is proud to call himself a soldier of Christ. Buddhism teaches resignation, Christianity the power of the determined will.

Furthermore, the Christian child is taught that, having been in Baptism made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven, he is now in a state of salvation which can be realized if he will keep the promises made by him, or for him by his Sponsors, and continue faithful to the precepts of his religion. The Buddhist also speaks of his religion as a 'state of salvation,' to be apprehended here, to be fully realized hereafter, when the chain of birth and death ceases to operate, and the soul emerges from the endless permutations of existence to the unchanging bliss of Nirvana.

Japanese Literature, whether religious or not, is full of this pessimistic view of nature. It does not derive it from the native Shinto, which, in its non-political forms, i.e. when not

dealing with the cult of the Ancestors of the Imperial House, is a pure worship of nature, as full of joy and life as was the nature worship of the ancient Greeks. Nor does it derive its pessimism from the teachings of Confucius; for the Chinese philosophers held that Nature was good, and Confucianists and Buddhists have long since parted company on this fundamental tenet. Japanese literature is pessimistic, because impregnated with Buddhism, the spirit of which remains even after the belief itself has been discarded.

I will now pass on to the more positive teachings of the two faiths which I have undertaken to compare.

(2). Christianity "believes," and Christian belief is not merely an assent of the mind to certain propositions which may or may not be true, but which have probability in their favour, but an act of the will, moved by Reason and Evidence, to accept certain propositions as absolutely true,—so true that we are ready to alter the whole course and tenour of our life in order to give expression to the Faith thus accepted.

With such a Faith the Christian believes in God, and in such a manner, that the existence of God is taken amongst us as a self-evident proposition.

Buddhism tries to deny God, but does not succeed very well. It supposes the existence of an eternal, uncreated matter, which lies at the base of all things. It is the eternal substance of which the Universe is only a phenomenon, the mere 'surface wave' which could not exist without the water of the Ocean underneath. It is called *Shinnyo*. Everything that is is a manifestation of *Shinnyo*, which is strictly material and impersonal. In the sum total, however, of things that exist must be included such abstract conceptions as Justice, Mercy, Truth. These also must be considered as manifestations of one and the same *Shinnyo*, and their existence shows that in *Shinnyo* there is also an immaterial and abstract part from which immaterial and abstract phenomena are evolved. This is spoken of as *Isshin*, the 'one Mind' of the Universe, as

Butsu or 'Buddha.' It is Mind immanent in the world, and is practically a God, though a God far off and dimly apprehended. The relations between *Shinnyo* and *Butsu*, between Matter and its indwelling Mind, are regulated and conditioned by the great Universal Law of Cause and Effect, which is equally eternal with them. From this primal Law (*Hö*) proceed all the manifestations of Matter and Mind which are known as the Universe.

These manifestations are, however, only phenomena. They have no real existence, according to the Buddhist. They have no more of reality than the images reflected in the dewdrop. I see the moon in the surface of a Lake : it is unreal. I look at the moon in the sky : it also is unreal, just as was the moon in the water. There is thus nothing but Illusion, and no true Universe. Nothing truly exists, except *Shinnyo*.

I believe that to this essentially false conception of the Universe may be traced very much of the moral weakness of Buddhism. If sin, falsehood, vice do not really exist, what is the good of setting yourself to combat them? You are only spending your efforts in vain.

This moral weakness has been exhibited more than once in Japanese history. It caused a whole list of abdications from high stations, at crises in the national history which demanded of those in high place that they should fight against their difficulties rather than acquiesce in them. It has shut the mouths of the Buddhist clergy more than once when, as authorized teachers of the Law, they should have spoken. We cannot expect the highest manifestations of moral courage from men who believe the world itself to be an Illusion. For to an Illusion there can be no responsibility.

In modern times there has been no lack of courage in the leaders of the Japanese people. The reforms of the Meiji era could not have been effected by a nation deficient in that quality. But the moral courage has come from Bushido, or from Confucianism, and these two forms of practical philosophy have been the peculiar privilege of the highest classes. In the

middle classes and below, where Buddhism is the strongest, moral courage is weakest. And it has been admirably observed by Mr. Inai Toshimichi, in his excellent monograph on Bushido, that the principles of Bushido, donned with the conscript's uniform, are oftentimes laid aside when the period of service is over. Neither Bushido nor Confucianism have ever adequately touched the lower strata of Japanese Society.

(3). According to Buddhism there has been no creation. Matter, Mind, Law, are 'co-eternal together and co-equal.' In some aspects indeed they are one. This conception is by no means peculiar to Buddhism. The Confucianist theologian who speaks of *Ten*, or the Divine Power, *Ri*, or the Divine Word, and *Ki*, or the Divine Energy, regards these three as being manifestations of one and the same thing, and as comprising the sum-total of all things, material and immaterial, so that it cannot be said that there ever was a time when the material world did not exist. In the Oriental Conception there never was a Creation in our sense of the term.

But if Buddhism denies a Creator and a Creation, it accepts a Trinity, as also does the Confucianism of the Shushi school prevalent in Japan. It conceives of Mind, Shinnyo, and Law, as a co-eternal and co-equal Trinity. But there is also a Trinity in Mind (Buddha), in Shinnyo, and in Law, just as we know that there were some heretics of the Formative Period of Christianity who said there were three Fathers, three Sons, and three Holy Ghosts.

Existence is supposed to go on simultaneously in three worlds or spheres of existence. 'Two worlds are ours' says the Christian poet; 'three worlds are ours,' would be the words of a Buddhist singer. We live (i) in the world of matter, which we can feel, touch and see. This we share with the whole of Nature. (ii) In the world of intellect and feeling, which we share with all our fellow men, that sphere of life in which, for instance, we are able to communicate thought by writing, or by a look, or by speech. (iii) In the abstract

world, which each man possesses between himself and God alone, the mysterious life of the 'secret citadel,' as it is called in many Buddhist poems.

Corresponding to these three 'worlds,' Buddha is said to have three bodies, and I have often thought of this Trinity of Buddha as an *illustration** of the Trinity of God—of the Father dwelling in mysterious light, knowable and yet not to be understood, of the Son binding us together as Men, of the Spirit pervading the Universe which came into being when He moved on the face of the Waters. The doctrine of the Trinity is no hindrance to the Buddhist's acceptance of Christianity. It is really an idea familiar to him and already accepted as true in principle.

(4). "*Heaven and Earth*" (Jap. *Tenchi*) is a well-known equivalent for the Universe. When the Christian confesses his belief in God as the Creator of Heaven and Earth, he affirms that there is nothing in the whole Universe which has not been created by God.

Let me try and describe the Buddhist conception of the Universe as I have learned it from Japanese books.

The Universe is full of life : it cannot be anything else in a Pantheistic system like that of Buddhism. But Life is of two kinds, the sentient life of angels, demons, animals and men, and the non-sentient life of stones, plants, water, etc. Religion concerns only the former.†

Sentient life (not created, be it remembered, but evolved from *Shinnyo*, Mind, and Law as a result of the continued interaction of cause and effect) is developed along six planes of

* I purposely say *illustration* ; but I am free to confess that the conception of the 'Three Bodies of Buddha' seemed to me to throw great light on the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity, which, however firmly I have held it myself, has always been somewhat difficult to explain to others. Buddhism has really helped me in this respect.

† And yet there are many Buddhists who would say with Nichiren that stones, plants, water, etc., are, equally with men, partakers of the Buddha Nature.

existence (*rokudō*). A sentient being may be a god or celestial being, a man, a brute beast, a hungry beast, a ferocious beast, or a devil. If he is a celestial being, his abode is heaven (of which there are many grades), if a devil, it is hell (of which there also many varieties). If he is a hungry beast or a ferocious beast, he may be in the form of a man, e.g. Caligula, or Caliban, or he may be in the form of an animal. If he is a man, he will always appear in the human form, and man has one advantage over all other beings in that he is capable of reaching Buddhahip.

Besides the possession of a body, every sentient being has a mind, which is identical with Buddha, or the Mind of the Universe, and is eternal. Round this mind are gathered certain faculties which form the connecting link between mind, the material body, and the outside world. These faculties (*skandhas*) are hearing, seeing, smelling, taste and touch, etc. The 'faculties' and mind, together, constitute the *Ego* or Individual.

At death, the *Ego* is separated from the body. Presently the "faculties" drift away, the *Ego* is dissolved, and the Mind alone remains. But the Mind, identical though it is with the Buddha-Mind, has nevertheless received a certain impress, good or bad, from the associations which it has had with the body. It is therefore unfit to return to God (if we may use the Christian term) until it has been purified from the results of its previous existence, and this purification can only be acquired by 'deeds done in the flesh.' The mind seeks therefore a rebirth suitable to the character which it has acquired in previous existences, and thus we get a cycle of death, birth, growth, maturity, decay, death, etc., etc., which may go on for ever and ever. It is not exactly transmigration; for the *Ego*, composed of the union of mind and faculties, is dissolved at each death and reconstituted at each birth: and yet there is always a conditioning connexion between this life and the past on the one side, and the future on the other.

This wheel of life and death is, in its revolutions, fraught with misery—with pain, suffering and sickness. The cause of

the misery is the transgression of the Law, and the cause of transgression is Ignorance, which leads to Desire.

It is the object of Religion to open men's minds by means of a true Enlightenment, and Buddhism claims to be *par excellence* the religion of Enlightenment (prajñā=gnosis). When a man's mind is enlightened by the Perception of the Truth, he will naturally become better. His condition at death will therefore improve: his next birth will be on a higher sphere. In the end he will attain to the full happiness of a Bosatsu or Perfected Saint, who knows and has conquered; and then, when death once more comes to him, he will have no need to be born again into the miseries of this wicked world. He will be merged in the indescribable state of Nirvana, a state which must be a happy one, if we consider that it implies an identity with God. The treadmill of life and death will have ceased to revolve for him, and in its stead there will be peace and rest.

But, of course, man's fate may be very different. The evil in this life may predominate over the good, and then there is nothing before him but a series of births along a descending grade of life. The sage of this life, we will call him a Lord Bacon, "the wisest, greatest, meanest of mankind," will in his next re-birth be a petty shop-keeper instead of Lord Chancellor of England, another birth may see him in brute form, another may find him a demon in one of the numerous hells of which Buddhism speaks. In such a case, the wheel of birth and death will go grinding out its alternations of growth and decay, pain and sickness, for countless ages and generations. There is no Mercy in that Wheel, and no Justice,—only a blind Law of Retribution by cause and effect, cause and effect. It is not Justice, for Justice implies a Ruler, and the hand that rules can always be swayed by Mercy or Clemency. It is Retribution, Nemesis, a conception worthy of Anarchism, but not worthy of the Dignity of the great Empire or Republic which comprises the federation of the world of reasonable man.

(5). Though not absolutely agreed as to the causes of the sin and misery that there is in the world, Buddhism and Christianity are both agreed in acknowledging the existence of misery and suffering, and both claim to be ways of delivering man from his miseries.

The Christian represents God as having provided mankind from the earliest times with Law and Prophets. His Law, first given to our original parent, was re-affirmed by Moses, and pressed upon man's conscience by the Prophets. In Christ it found a second Law-giver greater than Moses, a Prophet more powerful than Isaiah or Samuel, an Example of the most perfect type, and an Atoning Sacrifice. The Old Testament Dispensation, the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth, the Ministry, the Death, Burial, Resurrection, and Ascension of the one Lord Jesus Christ, are to the Catholic Christian so many acts in a Drama which had for its motive object the Enlightenment, Redemption, and Perfecting of Humanity, and man's share in his own salvation is to set his mind firmly against all that Christ combated, to accept all that Christ did for him, and to set his mind to act faithfully according to the principles of life laid down by Christ in His life.

Let us see what Buddhism has to say about the Salvation of Mankind.

Historically speaking, Buddhism is the religion founded by Gotama, or Sakyamuni, an Indian Prince who died B.C. 481, after a long and fruitful ministry amongst his own people. Shaka (to give him his Japanese name) did not claim, according to the more primitive traditions, to be more than an enlightened teacher. He taught men that Suffering was the greatest fact in the world, that Suffering was caused by Ignorance, and that Ignorance had its fruits in Desire or Lust. He laid open before them a 'noble eightfold Path' of good living, and was himself an inspiring example of his own teachings, both in word and deed. Thus he shewed men the way of salvation, stimulated them to enter upon it, and then taught them to work it out, each man for himself.

Recent events and the criticisms of western scholars have to a great extent turned the minds of the Japanese once more back to the great Founder of their Religion, and the more modern books speak very much about him. But for centuries Shaka has had only a secondary place in his own religion, and the Japanese Mahâyânists troubled themselves very little about him.

During the first and second centuries of the Christian era—(the reader should notice the date, which is important)—there took definite form in India, a development of Buddhism known as Mahâyâna or Great Vehicle, which has permeated the whole of the Far East with a Buddhistic teaching very far removed from the more primitive religion of Ceylon and Burma.

In the Mahâyâna books, while Shaka is still the great historical Teacher, he is overshadowed by the merits of other Buddhas and Bosatsu, greater and more mighty than himself.

All these Buddhas (some of them were even disciples of Shaka at one time), Kwannon, Vairocâna, etc., etc., are Saviours of mankind just as much as Shaka was. All of them are represented as having taught a doctrine very much similar to that of Shaka, and as having then left men to work out their salvation by their own efforts in accordance with the law that had been given them.

The number of Buddhas seems however to have been felt to be a difficulty, and in some of the latest books we get mention of an Original Buddha, incarnated again and again in different forms, to meet the wants of different ages and climes.

One of these Buddhas deserves to be specially mentioned—a Buddha often confounded with the 'Buddha of Original Enlightenment' or 'Original Buddha.' This Buddha is sometimes known as Amida, 'the Buddha of Infinite Light and Life.' To him mankind is said to owe a new form of salvation,—salvation 'by faith in his name.' It is noteworthy that this Buddha is not mentioned in any book demonstrably prior to the Christian era,

though it is more than probable that the germ of the doctrine was in Sakyamuni's mind before his death.

It is said of Arnida that he was originally a Prince of divine descent (though of his life no historical data are given), that he raised himself to the Buddhahood, that he registered a vow not to enter into Nirvana until he had devised a means of saving all mankind, that by his immense power, acquired through ages of patient toil, he created a Paradise to be peopled with those who have faith to invoke him, and that those who gain the entrance to that Paradise meet with no more obstacles to their progress in Perfection, but pass on into the perfect salvation of complete and boundless Enlightenment.

(6). The history of Christ comes to us in the Four Gospels, that of Sakyamuni is preserved for us in many Sutras of the Lesser and Greater Vehicle of Buddhism. Buddhist Legends have grown around the person of Sakyamuni which bear a striking likeness to the narratives respecting Jesus, especially the history of His miraculous Conception Birth and Temptation.

It has been alleged by some that the Christian Gospels have borrowed many of their facts from the Buddhist Hagiographies, by others, that the Buddhist writers have compiled their books by means of extracts from Christian writings.*

It is possible that neither of these hypotheses may be true. The Gospels are possibly not borrowed from Buddhist sources, nor the Buddhist stories from the Gospels. The Buddhist Gospels may represent the feeling of the human soul seeking after salvation and realizing at last that salvation is not to be attained, except a Divine Being should become incarnate and spend a life upon earth for the sole object of saving mankind. The Christian Gospel may represent the longings turned into facts, in a Saviour who, being God, became incarnate, the son of a Virgin, who lived among men for their instruction, died on

* There are, in fact, more resemblances with the so called Apocryphal Gospels. One noteworthy parallel is that both in the Apocryphal Gospels and in the Mahâyâna, there is no mention of a crucifixion or vicarial death of Christ.

the Cross for their redemption, and then rose again to take his seat at His Father's right hand. Christianity may be said to fulfil rather than to destroy these hopes of the Mahâyâna Gospel.

(7). The Christian is taught to look upon God in Christ as his Judge, and the feeling of personal responsibility evoked and sustained in the individual Christian by the realization of this doctrine, is one of the great motive powers of holy life. There are other motives, it is true, but this is (and ought to be) one of the strongest.

In Buddhism, there is no Judge and no Judgment, though the great law of Retribution, according to which each man is placed in this life according to the deeds of a previous existence, and will be placed in his next life according to the good or bad of the present, is in a sense a Judgment of the Individual Soul.

The Law of Karma is a fine conception, and gives a reasonable explanation of the inequalities of human life. It labours, however, under two great disadvantages. It is impossible to prove it, seeing that all memory of the past is blotted out ; and it sometimes acts as a palliative of crime and error. A man may excuse himself for his sin by saying that he cannot help the *Karma* with which he was born ; or he may acquiesce in undeserved misfortune for the same reason. Buddhism has always been a great system of acquiescence. It has never protested or fought against the great social evils of the world, it has at best taught men to flee from them. The present regeneration of Japan is not due to Buddhist influences, so much as to the Bushido of the *samurai* who were often not Buddhists except in name : and the Buddhist revival of the present day is largely owing to Christian example and teaching.

(8). Buddhism has this much in common with Christianity that it recognizes that religion must be universal, and must appeal to all men everywhere. There is nothing local or national about religion properly so-called. In this sense Buddhism has always realized a " catholic " ideal.

It claims to be a universal religion. It professes, as will be seen later on, to be a way of thought suited to all men, meeting their religious aspirations as it were half-way, and providing them with modes of faith and devotion suited to their human wants. It is remarkably free from intellectual and scientific prejudices, it has none of the supposed conflict with science and modern philosophy which has been so great an obstacle to the onward march of Christianity, and we may reasonably expect (I do not say, hope) that when it comes before the world, as it will do henceforth, as one of the religions of the Japanese Empire, now a leader in the van of civilization, it will prove itself a very dangerous rival to Christianity, on its own ground.

The old Shinto worship of Japan is not Buddhism, and the old code of chivalry known as Bushido, the chivalry which has produced the great warriors of to day, is not Buddhism. Yet Shinto and Bushido have each made their terms with Buddhism, and the religion of the non-Christian Japan is practically one.

Buddhism is moreover the common religious bond of the Far East. It is the religion professed in Korea and China, Siam, Burma, Tibet, Nepaul, and Ceylon. It is akin to Brahmanism, and it is to day being pushed in unostentatious ways in all parts of the Far East, and elsewhere. It comes, commended by its hoar antiquity, its Oriental mysteriousness, to a people weary of an orthodox and dead Christianity, turning for comfort to spiritualism and clairvoyance, and losing year by year that moral strength which has been and is the true glory of Christianity.

The answer that Christianity is to make to Buddhism will not be found in the redoubling of its missionary organizations and the sending forth of shoals of missionaries abundantly provided with material means for evangelization. It will be found in the careful study of the life and teachings of Buddha and his followers, and more especially of that form of Buddhism,

known as the Mahâyâna and contemporary with Christianity, which flourishes in China and Japan. Without such a study we cannot give to Buddhism the answer that it needs, with such a study we may be surprised to find how many are the points of resemblance. It is to supply in some measure this want that the present book has undertaken.

In the mean time, let us remember that the Buddhist agrees with us in saying, that religious truth is universal and must be catholic, applicable to and accepted by men of every nation and people; and that he can be met and won for Christ by a faithful realization of the oneness and holiness of the Christian name.

(9). Buddhism has some conception of the Communion of Saints. It recognizes that all men who have a perception of the Truth (what is called in Japanese *Satori* or "Enlightenment") do form, in fact, a mystic brotherhood bound to one another by many ties of life and doctrine. It also teaches the existence, around the persons of Sakyamuni and other Buddhas, of a class of beings called Bodhisatvas (Jap. Bosatsu) who, standing themselves on the brink of Nirvana, are able to stretch forth a saving and helping hand to their struggling fellow-beings.

These Bosatsu form a body of super-human intercessors and mediators, and it is the boast of Mahâyânism that, whereas the earlier 'Small Vehicle Buddhism' only taught a man to save his own soul, the larger vehicle of the Mahâyâna teaches a man to bend all his energies to the attainment of Bodhisatvaship, so as to be able to help in saving mankind.

Buddhism therefore has a dim conception of the Christian doctrine of the Communion of Saints, but lacking (except in one instance) anything approaching to a Central Mediator, such as Christ is to the Christian, the doctrine has developed in various mutually opposite directions.

In some sects, the whole attention has been devoted to some particular 'saint.' Thus, in certain bodies, such as the *Tendai*,

the believer is taught to devote his attention largely to Kwannon, in another, the *Shingon*, to Kōbō Daishi, in a third, to Nichiren. These Saints, especially Kōbō and Nichiren, have so fully absorbed the attention of their worshippers that the original founder of Buddhism has been nearly forgotten, and Buddhism has practically become a system with no saints but many gods.

In other cases, the existence of good saints has been logically twisted into a sanction for the co-existence of equally powerful 'bad saints' or 'devils'—men developed along bad lines just as the Buddhas have been developed along good ones.

A third tendency has consequently been manifested, to discard the help of all Buddhas and Bosatsus, and to require of each soul to work out its own salvation by and for itself.

The Christian Doctrine of the Communion of Saints keeps Christ as its central point. Christ remains as the centre and key of the whole position. To Him all eyes, of 'saints on earth, and saints in heaven' are directed, and so long as they are directed to him, there will be no tendency to polytheism.

It is an actual and not a sentimental communion, which works for efficiency, and the best test of the existence of this great spiritual fact is to be found in the vigour, prudence, patience, humility with which Christ's business in the world is carried on; for the realization of the common brotherhood in Christ which all Christians have, and the acting thereon, is one part at least of the Communion of Saints. This kind of communion will always commend itself to the Japanese mind, which is essentially practical. As for the other parts of the doctrine, we may expect him, possibly, to laugh at many of the superstitious dresses which the doctrine has assumed in the cults based on legendary narratives about the Saints; yet when we consider the care which he exhibits in the burial of his dead, and the scrupulous exactness with which he offers worship to the Manes of his ancestors and pays reverence to their tombs, we shall understand that nothing will content him in the way of religion which does not make full provision for the

satisfaction of those legitimate desires of the human soul for which the Communion of Saints is the Christian answer.

(10). Of the Forgiveness of Sins ordinary Buddhism knows nothing. The great law of Karma which it preaches precludes this possibility. Every good deed brings its suitable reward, and if a man has, voluntarily or not, done what is bad, he has got to go on eating the bitter fruits until the whole crop is exhausted.

But there is one kind of Buddhism very popular in Japan, known as the cult of Amida, which practically admits the doctrine.

According to the sects which worship Amida (Jōdo and Shinshū), the Buddha *Amitābha* or *Amitāyus*, "the Buddha of Immeasurable Light and Life," having attained Almighty Power by virtue of his own merits and holiness, and looking down with compassion on his unhappy fellow mortals struggling hopelessly to overcome Karma by their own deeds, made a Vow to provide mankind with a way of salvation, open to all, and on more generous terms than the steep uphill road of salvation by one's own exertions. He therefore established a Paradise of his own, and decreed that whosoever, man, woman, or child, should, with faith in his mercy and power, invoke his sacred name, should have the power given him to be born again in that Paradise, and there, freed from all the obstacles that beset man's road to bliss, attain at one bound to the Perfection which he would otherwise strive after so long and so hopelessly.

We have therefore in Buddhism two methods of salvation, the gate of salvation by one's own works (*jiriki-mon*) and the gate of salvation by faith in the works of another (*tariki-mon*), and in this latter system the forgiveness of sins is tacitly implied; for salvation is impossible without forgiveness.

When it can be shown that just as Amida and Christ represent the same idea of salvation by means of an Atone-

ment,* so also do they represent one and the same Divine Person, a great step will have been taken for the reconciliation of East and West.

I believe that Gotama derived his ideas about Amida from the prophets of the Captivity who were his contemporaries. I believe further that the Buddhology of many of the Mahâyâna books had its origin in the same Life which lies at the basis of the Christian Christology. At the same time, I grant that it is not impossible that the idea of a Saviour, such as Amida is, may have arisen in the Indian mind quite independently of the Christian revelation, and may have been intended to point men to that apparently universal axiom of religion—man's need of Forgiveness and God's suitable provision.

I have felt for years that Amida was the shadow, dim, indistinct, distorted, of the True Substance, Christ: and it is in the recognition of this shadowy identity that I can see, or seem to see, the future conquest of Japan for Christ.

(11). Buddhism, which speaks of existence before as well as after death, which teaches that a man must expiate in a body that which he does now in a body; and that he is expiating now in the flesh that which he did in former existences in the flesh, can not with any face deny the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body.

Still less can the Amida-worshipper deny this truth, who holds that at death Amida comes to meet the soul, and conducts it, preserving its identity, to the Western Paradise, where, in a land of absolute purity, it is prepared for the perfection of Nirvana.

Christian and Buddhist therefore alike teach, though with differing details, that man shall rise again with his body and

* The long labours and mortifications which Amida is said to have undergone in the process of collecting that store of merit which enabled him to found his Paradise must be looked upon much in the same light as Christ's life and sufferings on earth. In that sense I apply the word 'atonement' to Amida.

give account of his works. The Christian doctrine is the simpler of the two, for it does not necessitate all the elaborate machinery of skhandhas and mind, ego and non-ego, reincarnation and rebirth, and simplicity is generally a mark of truth. It is also the more ennobling, for man feels no responsibility so long as he is dealing only with an institution and not a person. He will die for his King, but he will defraud the Customs. Responsibility to a personal Judge is a nobler motive than the desire to get even with a machine-like law. Buddhism has felt this and has recognized it by the adoption of Amida, and the law is perhaps well illustrated by the fact that, whilst a bad Christian is a very contemptible person, a good Christian is the noblest of beings that the world has seen, for he lives in constant realization of the Presence of God.

The two religions agree, in recognizing the existence of the person after death : and the Resurrection of the *Body* must be explained with St. Paul :—" It is sown a natural body : it is raised a spiritual body."

(12). The end of Buddhism is Nirvana, an absorption into God, in which all personality ceases, and nothing remains except God.*

The end of Christianity is Life Eternal, and all the countless activities that life implies.

But "Life," and not "Cessation," is the natural goal of existence. We envy the man whose life is full of pleasant activities, and not the man whose existence is a Nirvana of unconscious absorption.

Buddhism itself recognizes this. Amidaism is a Buddhist protest against Nirvana ; it takes *Jōbutsu*, the attainment of Buddhahood, as something active and happy, and the Japanese Buddhist is more attracted by the active joys of the Western Paradise than by the dreamy delights of a shadowy Nirvana.

'I am come,' says Christ, "that they may have life, and

* To this Nichirenism is the Buddhist exception. See Lecture IV.

that they may have it more abundantly." It is the abundant life of true Christianity that the Buddhist has learned to admire.

I have hitherto sketched the Creed of Buddhism as it appears in Japan, and have contrasted it with Christianity. The differences between the two religions are not many but they are most weighty.

Christianity possesses God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, revealed in Christ, the Pattern, Saviour, and Judge. It has the Spirit of God ever present with it, and, having that Spirit, it has life.

Buddhism has not the true knowledge of the Father, nor of Christ, nor of the Holy Spirit. Yet it possesses foreshadowings or resemblances of these truths, and it does not seem to be impossible for Buddhism so to turn to Christ as to make perfect and complete all that it now possesses.

Christ did not come to destroy but to fulfil, and in the same way Christianity is bound to discover and make perfect all the elements of Truth which there are in the world. It is difficult at all times to turn men from what they believe even to a better creed, but Truth is great and will in the end prevail.

(13). After having rehearsed the Apostles' Creed, the English child is questioned about the Commandments, and is taught to refer them to God as their Author. They are "the same which God spake," through Moses at Mt. Sinai.

The Buddhist also has ten commandments but they are based on other considerations than the expressed will of God.

Man, says the Buddhist, is a part of the Universe, intimately linked to every part of Creation. He has therefore duties to all living creatures, such as universal kindness, philanthropy &c.

His present birth and education, he owes to his parents, to whom he gives filial obedience, reverence, and love.

As a social being, he comes into contact with teachers, employers, rulers, &c., to whom he owes faithfulness, diligence

and justice. As a religious being, he comes into contact with the three Precious Things, Buddha, the Law, and the Church, to which again he owes certain duties of reverence and worship.

These four relationships of man—to the Universe, to his parents, to his sovereign and rulers, and to his religion, form the basis of his ethical or moral duties. And out of these relationships Mahâyânism evolves a decalogue of its own. There are ten prohibitions, it being understood that when a wrong thing is prohibited its opposite virtue is commanded.

1. Killing.....implying the command of kindness.
2. Theft,.....implying diligence.
3. Adultery or Unseemly Sexual Conduct, implying Purity of Life.
4. Lying.....contrary command, Truth.
5. Unseemly Language.....Plainness.
6. Slander, 'words that may do hurt,' implying the duty of 'Kind Words.'
7. Words of double meaning.....leading to 'let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay.'
8. Covetousness and inordinate desire.....contentment and moderation.
9. Anger.....patience and long suffering.
10. Blinded prejudice.....an open mind.

It will be seen by a comparison of the Buddhist ethical code with that of the Christian Religion that the Buddhist Code lacks all those precepts which concern the "duty towards God" as it is explained in the Catechism. There is no command forbidding the worship of other Gods, no prohibition of idolatry and superstitious practices, no prohibition of profane swearing, and other ways of taking God's name in vain, no injunction to observe the holiness of the day of rest, and no direct command enjoining obedience to parents.

These omissions, however, are apparent rather than real. Buddhism recognizes the family, and the duty that the son

owes to his parents is, as we have seen, one of the fundamental bases of Buddhist morality, as is also the duty which man, as a religious being, owes to Buddha, the Law, and the Community of monks. There is therefore nothing in Buddhism to militate against the earlier commandments of the Mosaic decalogue. The principle of a duty towards God is indeed implicitly recognized, and if Buddhism will but be true to the tenth commandment of its own decalogue, it will be led by its "open mind" to adopt the Christian attitude with regard to God. And, indeed, such is already to a very great extent the case. Many a Buddhist, without leaving his old faith, is living a life of conscious adherence to Christian morality, and this fact deserves all our commendation and praise.

It is impossible (and certainly not advisable) to say which of the two codes is the better, seeing that they cover almost identically the same ground and in almost the same manner. The value of a moral code does not lie in the paper that it is written upon, but in the manner in which it is kept, and a religion must be judged by its fruits. I have been an Englishman for fifty years, and a citizen of the world, and having eyes and ears, I know that the basal ethical laws of our holy faith are not always observed as they should be in England. I have been a resident in Japan for over the fifth part of a century, and I also know that the Buddhist law in this country is not always kept—there is many a sore spot that I could lay my finger on here. In St. Paul's time, the Jews had a law which they did not keep as they ought to have done, and the Gentiles had another, similar, law which they did not keep as they should. And so both came under condemnation. The case is exactly the same now between Christian and Buddhist in matters of the moral law. Glass is a commodity increasingly used in domestic architecture, and the practice of stone-throwing is apt to lead to disastrous results among one's own windows.

I do not intend, therefore, to try and pander to Christian vanity by describing the immoralities of the benighted heathen,

nor to minister to Buddhist conceit by holding up to ridicule the inconsistencies and hypocrisies of their Christian neighbours.

If we can each on our part lay aside vanity and conceit, and that ridiculous feeling of self-sufficiency which makes us unwilling to be taught, and if we can learn, all of us, to walk worthily of such light as we possess, there will be no difficulty in the way of ethical and moral progress.

As Buddhists or as Christians we shall do our best to keep the law, such as we have it, and then we shall find that we unconsciously rise to a higher ethical law, which is neither Buddhist nor exclusively Christian, but which is universally adapted for all men everywhere. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." On these two commandments hang *all* the Law, and the Prophets, and not only the Mosaic enactments. Confucius may have put the matter one way, Christ in another. What is really important is that the Law be observed.

(14). In the Church Catechism the child is instructed that the law of God cannot be kept perfectly without the Divine aid, and that the Divine aid is to be obtained by prayer, of which the Lord's Prayer is the highest model.

Christianity has always been consistent with itself in this matter. It has always recognized the need and value of prayer, and there never has been an age in which Christian men have not prayed, or in which God has not showed His acceptance of prayer by the wonderful answers that He has vouchsafed to it.

The experience of Buddhism on the subject of prayer is very remarkable.

Buddhism began by recognizing no gods, having no temples, and offering no prayers. With the old Buddhist conceptions indeed how could it be otherwise? What was the good of praying to the Almighty Creator, if there was n't one? or to the Buddha, who had gone into a Nirvana of unconscious-

ness? or to the gods, seeing that they were conceived of as beings, who just like men, were subject to the law of birth, death, and re-birth, and might at the next turn of the wheel be born as beasts or demons? Or how could a man pray to the great treadmill of cause and effect, cause and effect, which Sakyamuni placed in the seat of God? Prayer was shut out by Shaka's conception of the universe.

'Naturam expellas furca tamen usque recurret' sang the Latin poet, and a Japanese singer speaks of himself in a similar strain, as having carefully closed every cranny and chink that might give entrance to his chamber, only to find his rest disturbed by the cricket which got in in spite of all his efforts. Prayer cannot be excluded from the human life,—a philosopher here and there may proclaim his superiority to such a superstition, but even he will end by bowing to the stern necessity and I am sure that if the strictest of prayerless philosophers will be honest with himself he will find that there have been moments when he has been forced, against his own judgment even, to utter words which could not be distinguished from prayers. There are times when the heart of man *will* speak.

Buddhism found itself confronted with this necessity, and the history of Buddhist developments may be looked upon as a series of efforts to discover substitutes for prayer.

When the prayerless stage of Buddhism was over, the period of incantations and amulets came in. Men prayed for various objects connected with their daily life,—for health, preservation, wealth,—sometimes to Buddhas like Kwannon the goddess of mercy, sometimes to Buddhist Saints, sometimes to evil spirits. This phase of Buddhism is to be found in its grossest forms in Tibet, in its most refined types in Japan. Amulets, and charms, blessed medals, and holy images, may be bought here and there, and a well-worn image of Binzuru Sama in the great Temple of Asakusa shows how innate in the heart of miserable man is the desire to pray.

The next development of Buddhism was the contemplative.

The Contemplative or Zen sects lay more stress on meditation than on prayer, and, precisely for this reason, they have failed to win a following among the poor and needy. They were for a while in high favour among the educated and military classes, and even now are proud of the honourable designation of the 'Stoics' of Japan. From our point of view as well as their own, they are undoubtedly right in maintaining that the tenets of the older and more ritualistic sects are contrary to the original spirit of true Buddhism.

Hōnen Shōnin, the founder of the *Jodo* or Pure Land Sect, and *Shinran Shōnin*, the founder of the *Honganji* or Temples of Amida's great Vow, may be said to have restored prayer to Japan. "Thou that hearest prayer," says the Psalmist, "unto Thee shall all flesh come." The conception of Amida, the Saviour, is precisely that of One that heareth prayer, and it is no wonder that Amida, more than any other Buddhist conception, should have drawn religious Japan to himself. One occasionally sees in Buddhist papers prayers to Amida which, *mutatis mutandis*, might pass for prayers to Christ, and a few days ago in Shiba Park I heard an out-of-door sermon from a student which might easily have been mistaken for a Christian discourse except for here and there a phrase which evidently was drawn from another treasure house than the Christian.

I have never met with a Buddhist who did not acknowledge the great beauty of the greatest of all Christian prayers, the Lord's Prayer. And no wonder, when we consider the many and various virtues and graces which it embraces. Every word has its meaning: when we say *Our*, it implies our brotherhood as men and as Christians, when we say *Father*, we are taught filial affection and trust, when we speak of the Father *which is in Heaven*, the words teach humility and submissiveness on the part of sinful man. Reverence, loyalty, obedience, a recognition of the perfect state which makes Heaven the model of Earth, contentment and moderation,

knowledge of self, a forgiving spirit, a spirit of humility and an implicit confidence in God—all these things are implied in the prayer which Christ gave us to be the full and sufficient vehicle for the true aspirations of the humble human heart.

(15). We are now in a position to summarize our review of the respective dogmas of Buddhism and Christianity.

I have said nothing about philosophic speculations, because Japan, with her open mind, has adopted the philosophic theories of the West, and the religio-scientific problems of Japan are consequently at the present moment about the same as those of England, Germany, or America.

But there are certain speculations which concern the foundations of religious belief and life, and these, though in Buddhism nothing ever rises beyond a philosophic theory, correspond to the fundamental dogmas of Christianity, and it is in this sense that I can speak of the 'respective dogmas of Buddhism and Christianity.'

As theories, ideas, speculations, we find in Buddhism many of the doctrines of Christianity. We find a dim, but real consciousness of a Supreme Being, a Mind of the Universe, an Emersonian Oversoul. We have the recognition of human depravity and corruption. We have an ethical law which runs very much along the lines of the Mosaic decalogue, and is not inconsistent with the Sermon on the Mount.

We have in the Buddha Sakyamuni, who is an historical personage, a law-giver and prophet not unlike Moses, in the Buddha Amida, a Saviour strikingly like to the Christ of Catholic Theology. We have hints given us of a Trinity in God, a divine Incarnation, a Virgin-Birth, a Life of Labour and Suffering in order that the Salvation of man might be accomplished, of a Judgment, a Life after Death, a State of Future Bliss in Paradise, all ending with the "Beatific Vision" of Nirvana.

These things in Buddhism are, as it were, in the clouds.

There is enough to swear by, but the certainty of historical demonstration is lacking. There is no long-continued revelation of God the Father such as the Old Testament gives us in the history of Israel; no historical determination of the actual fact of man's Redemption, such as the Christian has in the Gospels, no demonstration of the Spirit with power as there was at Pentecost and has been ever since, visible and audible to those who would look and listen.

And, lacking the true historical background, (for the Buddhas of the Mahâyâna are not historical personages, and Sakyamuni, as he is described in Northern Sutras, is almost another Person than the historical Gautama) Buddhism has lacked much of the active strength and energy of Christendom. And yet who would venture to deny its unquestionable merits, or refuse the hope that, turning to Christ, it may obtain from Him all the benefits of the Cross, without being obliged to renounce the good it already possesses?

Buddhism has never been the sole motive power of religion in Japan as Christianity has been, in a sense, in Europe. Other religions and other forms of thought have held sway.

The old native Shinto, the nature worship of the heathen world, akin to the mythologies of Greece and Rome, that peopled the hills and streams with living deities, and talked of the time when the gods dwelt on earth and became the protectors and ancestors of this well beloved land, is still, as it has always been, an influence to be reckoned with.

More powerful, because more cultured, has been the Confucianism of the Chinese Sages, the calm philosophy which refuses to be thrown into undue excitement over any of the changes and chances of this mortal life, which makes for a mild benevolence, a stern austerity, a diligent and painstaking studiousness, and yet, witness China, not much for general effectiveness. It is still here, and a power.

More powerful still has been the Japanese Bushido or Chivalric Code, an eclectic system neither Buddhist, nor Con-

fucianist nor Shinto, and yet rooted in all three. Bushido is mainly responsible for the awakening and rejuvenation of modern Japan. It does not speak of Heaven, but of Japan, it does not point to God, but to the Emperor, in whom are the spirits of the Divine Ancestors. It teaches loyalty, fidelity, devotion, and in loyalty, fidelity, and devotion, it places the highest virtue. It has countless deities, adopted from the Shinto, gods of the family, the village, the nation—and these gods are the souls of its own departed heroes, the warriors who have died in battle for Country or Sovereign, and whose worship is conducted by the Emperor himself in the *Patriot Shrine* in Tokyo, which is the model of many other similar shrines in the cities of the Empire, just as, when St. Paul was preaching in Asia Minor, the Empire was being covered with Temples, dedicated to the "Genius of Rome," and erected by the zeal of officials and patriots.

But over all these forms of religion Buddhism has contrived, partly by its 'sweet reasonableness,' (which, might also be called its 'Protean flexibility'), to keep its sway. Just as in Europe or America, the very atheists and unbelievers remain Christian in their language, and constantly express themselves in phrases and locutions which are meaningless save in a Christian sense, so in Japan, Buddhist thought dominates the language of the people, and Buddhism with the great bulk of the nation is the greatest because most omni-present factor in religious life.

It is to a people like this that the Christian (I will not say the missionary, because the term is sometimes, unfortunately, used to denote the man who is paid to be religious) is sent or comes. His errand is to a people whose moral life is quite as good—in some respects better, in other respects worse, but, on the average, quite as good as his own. He has no need to teach them not to steal, nor tell lies, nor break the seventh commandment. They know they must not do these things even if they sometimes do them.

What he has got to teach them is that in Christianity, the religion which proclaims the Gospel of God the Father who made them and all the world, of God the Son who redeemed them and all mankind, of God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifies all the elect people of God, and them if they are of that number, the Japanese will find, and may obtain, the very best of religious life, the summit and crown of Buddhism, Confucianism, and even Bushido. The whole thing lies in the preaching, work, and person, of Jesus Christ, whose historic actuality gives definiteness to the whole fabric.

The people who will ultimately convert Japan are not so much the missionaries (though I, who know them and have been of them, know their high worth right well) as the clergy and laity in the home countries. The Japanese reads our papers and magazines and knows all our religious discussions, he travels the whole world over, note book and pencil in hand, and makes many an observation that we foreigners little suspect. He has an intense admiration for the practically useful, and when he sees our Faith, in what he considers its native soil, bringing forth fruits of unmistakeable good living and a civilization truly Christian, he will not hesitate to adopt anything that is pure, just, holy, or of good report.....for his own ethical creed has taught him to lay aside all blind prejudice and look at everything with an open mind.

